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National Technical Assistance Center on Transition



Quick Guide: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Youth-Secondary Transition

Lupe Espinosa is a 16-year-old student with a moderate intellectual disability. She is in high school and moved to the United States five years ago from Mexico. Her mother is Elizabeth Espinosa, a Latina woman in her mid-30s who also immigrated to the United States from Mexico with Lupe. Members in attendance at the IEP meeting included the school psychologist, an employment specialist from the school district, a Spanish speaking English language learner (ELL) teacher who served as a translator, an administrator, Lupe's service coordinator from the developmental disability center, Lupe, and her mother.

The special education teacher began the meeting by explaining to Mrs. Espinosa and Lupe the primary purpose of the meeting was to plan for Lupe's remaining high school program and to discuss goals for Lupe's future. Mrs. Espinosa indicated she understood. The special education teacher and school psychologist summarized Lupe's cognitive and academic skills and stated they believed the best type of program for Lupe would be one that taught her daily living skills, employment skills, and independent living skills so she can make the transition to someday "being on her own as much as possible." They further indicated this type of program may not lead to a high school diploma, but Lupe would receive a certificate of attendance or could enroll in a transition program for 18- to 22-year-olds offered by the school district if she decided not to exit high school.

During the IEP meeting, Mrs. Espinosa's shared that her vision for Lupe was to live at home after completing high school, help with family responsibilities and child care needs, and work part-time in a family-owned dress shop in the neighborhood in order to contribute to the family's income. Mrs. Espinosa shared her efforts to teach Lupe tasks to help at home and in a family member's dress shop. The IEP team emphasized other jobs in the community (fast food jobs) but Mrs. Espinosa balked. She emphasized that her family needs Lupe's assistance at home. The transition planning team had a completely different idea about what Lupe should be doing in the future. The mom's input was not included in the IEP and they did not attempt to resolve the disconnect between postsecondary goals. This meeting ended with the teacher asking for the parent's signature on the transition IEP. The teacher explained that a Spanish version would be mailed in two weeks. The parent signed the IEP.

Adapted from: Greene, G. (2011). *Transition planning for culturally and linguistically diverse youth*. Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Youth and Secondary Transition

Barrera and Corso (2003) provide an excellent discussion of the terms cultural diversity and cultural and linguistic diversity, which they considered synonymous. They note the term cultural diversity is used by many to "identify differences that are perceived to stem from culture," focusing on racial and ethnic heritage or identity differences "without examining or

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controlling for actual differences in behaviors, languages, values, and beliefs” (p. 5). They further point out that cultural diversity is not a static quality, cannot be reliably determined by ethnicity alone, and should not be looked at as a “risk factor that must somehow be lessened or reduced” (p. 5). Cultural and linguistic diversity (CLD) refers to interactions and comparisons between people within an environment, rather than specific characteristics of an individual (Barrera & Corso, 2003). Students who are typically included in this category are (a) African Americans, (b) Asian Americans, (c) Native Americans, (d) Hispanic Americans, (e) Pacific Islanders, (f) students who speak English as a second language, and (g) students who have immigrant or undocumented status (Trainor, Lindstrom, Simon-Burroughs, Martin, & McCray Sorrels, 2008). Recently, Lipscomb et al. (2017) found students with disabilities are 5% more likely than students without disabilities to be black (19% vs. 24%); but almost equally as likely to be Hispanic (24% vs. 25%) and to be limited English proficient (10% vs. 8%).

In addition, data from the National Longitudinal Transition Studies (NLTS1 & NLTS2) indicated post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities are lower than their peers without disabilities in the areas of education, employment, independent living (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Newman et al., 2011). Specifically, post-school outcomes for students with disabilities who are considered culturally and linguistically diverse fall even further behind. Findings from NLTS2 indicated African American (48%) and Hispanic (53.6%) individuals with disabilities were less likely to be employed up to 8 years after graduating from high school compared to their white peers with disabilities (65.5%). Additionally, African American and Hispanic young adults with disabilities reported making a lower hourly wage and received fewer benefits (e.g., health insurance) through their jobs than their white peers with disabilities.

Why is Supporting CLD Youth and their Families in Secondary Transition Important?

Some identified barriers CLD students with disabilities and their families face include: (a) professional insensitivity and discrimination (Greene & Kochhar-Bryant, 2009); (b) lack of information about their rights, processes, and procedures (Kim & Morningstar, 2005); and (c) lack of access to community resources and activities (Cartledge, Gardner, & Ford, 2008). To address these barriers, Trainor, Lindstrom, Simon-Burroughs, Martin, and Sorrells (2008) expressed the need for educators, researchers, and policy makers to keep in mind social, political, economic, educational, and cultural context when developing instructional tools and interventions to assist CLD students with disabilities transition to positive post-school outcomes.

What Does Research Say About How to Support CLD Youth in Secondary Transition?

Cote, Jones, Sparks, and Aldridge (2012) identified four steps practitioners should follow to support transition age CLD youth and their families during transition planning. These steps included: (a) view families as valuable members of the transition planning team; (b) demonstrate cultural competence; (c) support the values of the family when identifying

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transition goals including prevocational training, job placement, independent living, and community work experiences; and (d) use a family centered approach by allowing the student to lead their own transition planning meeting as it relates to their own cultural practices or beliefs. In addition, Greene (2011) provided best practices in culturally responsive transition planning using a family centered approach. Some practices identified included (a) understanding cultural biases, (b) developing culturally responsive transition Individual Education Programs (IEP), (c) intentionally and closely collaborating with families, (d) encouraging students to be active participants in their meetings, and (e) providing training on cultural competence with school personnel. Lastly, Cartledge, Gardner, and Ford (2008) suggested several instructional strategies for supporting CLD Youth in secondary transition including: (a) teacher-directed, systematic instruction; (b) goal setting; and (c) self-monitoring. Goal setting and self-monitoring can be taught to assist students with managing their academic behaviors and independently meeting their desired goals.

Where Do You Find Resources to Support CLD Youth and their Families during Secondary Transition?

[Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Transition Success Research Project](#)

The CLD Transition Research Project is an initiative of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa's Center on Disability Studies. Research is also being conducted by four collaborating US sites with strong records of research in disabilities and/or cultural and linguistic diversity, thereby providing national scope. Each site is focusing on a different cultural group including (a) North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University focusing on African Americans, (b) Northern Arizona University focused on Native Americans and Hispanic Americans, (c) The Ohio State University focusing on African Americans, (d) University of Washington focusing on Asian Americans and Hispanic Americans, and (e) University of Hawaii at Manoa focusing on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. This site provides products, resources, updated research information, case studies, and additional useful information on these projects.

[Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Transition Planning Annotated Bibliography](#)

The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) has an annotated bibliography on transition planning for CLD youth. This annotated bibliography provides descriptions of literature supporting transition practices for CLD youth and resources to assist practitioners in providing culturally responsive transition planning for CLD youth with disabilities.

[Developing Culturally Responsive Approaches To Serving Diverse Populations](#)

The Center for Parent Information and Resources (CIPR) has several resources for serving CLD students with disabilities. This resource is a guide for community-based organization on developing cultural competency in order to work effectively with diverse populations. In addition to this guide there are other resources on their website across different topic areas.

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Diversity Rx

Diversity Rx is an organization that promotes cultural competence to improve the quality of healthcare for immigrant, ethnically diverse, and minority communities.

The Multicultural Career Counseling & Development Competencies

The Multicultural Career Counseling & Development Competencies aim to ensure that all individuals practicing in, or training for practice in, the career counseling and development field are aware of the expectation that we, as professionals, will practice in ways that promote the career development and functioning of individuals of all backgrounds.

The National Association for Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns (NAMRC)

The National Association for Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns (NAMRC) is a professional association of dedicated individuals, whose mission is promoting cultural diversity and disability through advocacy for excellence and equity in rehabilitation research, education, and practice.

The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCREST)

NCCREST is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, to provide technical assistance and professional development to close the achievement gap between students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their peers, and reduce inappropriate referrals to special education. The project targets improvements in culturally responsive practices, early intervention, literacy, and positive behavioral supports.

How Does This Apply to Administrators?

- Provide training for your staff on cultural competency: <http://www.pacer.org/cultural-diversity/resources-for-educators.asp>
- Understand how to engage culturally diverse families for student success: <http://www.pacer.org/cultural-diversity/>
- Use the process of cultural reciprocity to enhance relationships with all youth and families, regardless of their cultural backgrounds: [NCSET Essential Tools, p.26](#)
- Adequately prepare your teachers to work with CLD students: <https://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200511/DanielFriedmanBTJ1105.pdf>
- Engage families of CLD students with disabilities: <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/tran/perspectives-resources/q2/p07/>
- Understand the needs of varying cultural groups including their history, perspectives, and other cultural considerations:
 - Native Americans: <http://naptac.org/resources/publications/historical-perspectives-for-working-with-native-parents/>
 - African Americans/Black: <http://www.blackdisability.org>

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How Does This Apply to School-Level Practitioners?

- Understand how to support CLD students for academic achievement: [Supporting CLD learners for Academic Achievement](#)
- Understand evidence-based practices in culturally responsive teaching: <http://www.k12.wa.us/BEST/Symposium/2d.pdf>
- Utilize multicultural materials in your classrooms: <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/how-choose-best-multicultural-books/>
- Understand strategies for teaching CLD students: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/107003/chapters/Diverse-Teaching-Strategies-for-Diverse-Learners.aspx>
- Foster relationships with parents, family members, and community members to understand the culture of each student and family you are working with: <http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/diversity/culturalcompetence>
- Engage in routine communication with general education teachers on how to meet the needs of the student: <http://www.specialeducationguide.com/pre-k-12/the-parent-teacher-partnership/>
- Understand challenges and solutions that can impact CLD youth with disabilities: [NCSET Essential Tools, p.16](#)
- Practical forms, tools, and checklists to assist in providing transition services for CLD youth with disabilities Greene, G. (2011): [Transition planning for culturally and linguistically diverse youth](#). Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

How Does This Apply to Transition Specialists?

- Provide tips for transition planning for CLD youth with disabilities to staff and families: <http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c250.pdf>
- Understand how to design transition programs for CLD students with disabilities: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1014882>
- Understand how to work with diverse youth and families in transition and provide training: <https://www.multiculturalfamilies.org/resources/professional-webinars/>
- Plan for “making action plans” (MAPS). The MAPS process involves asking questions to gather important background information about the student and their family. Then use this information to create an action plan to achieve the transition goals of the youth and family. Find information for planning a MAPS meeting; as well as, train other on how to plan effective meetings [Tool 2. NCSET Essential Tools, p.34](#)
- Share completed MAPS forms with teachers and school level practitioners to assist them in transition planning: [Tool 3. NCSET Essential Tools, p. 36](#)
- Provide training for your staff on cultural competency: <http://www.pacer.org/cultural-diversity/resources-for-educators.asp>

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- Collaborate with educators on writing IEP goals to support students in academic and transition settings: <http://www.wrightslaw.com/bks/feta2/ch12.ieps.pdf>

How Does This Apply to Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors?

- Foster relationships with parents, family members, and community members to understand the culture of each student and family you are working with <http://www.rtnetwork.org/learn/diversity/culturalcompetence>.
- Understand challenges and solutions that can impact CLD youth with disabilities [NCSET Essential Tools, p.16](#)
- Assist community based organizations with developing cultural competency for working with and employing CLD youth with disabilities <http://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Cultural-Competence-Guide.pdf>

How Does This Apply to Families?

- Gain information and resources about transition planning: <http://www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/planning/>
- Understand how to participate in your student’s IEP meetings: <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/transition-starters/#parents>
- Understand the role of families and advocates in helping students with disability disclosure: <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/information-brief-21>
- Learn about your transition age student and Supplemental Security Income (SSI): http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=65&type=topic&id=7
- Learn information about how to prepare your child for college, your roles, rights, and responsibilities, what laws protect you and your students’ rights, and how to create a plan to help your child achieve their goals after high school from a Parent’s Guide to Transition for students with disabilities to postsecondary education, employment, and independent living: <https://www.heath.gwu.edu/parents-guide-transition>
- Visit parent technical assistance centers to gain information about transition planning such as the Native American Parent Technical Assistance Center <http://naptac.org/about-us/>

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